

**Thomas Jefferson to William Hamilton, April 22,
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TO WILLIAM HAMILTON OF WOODLANDS J. MSS.

Philadelphia Apr. 22. 1800.

Dear Sir, —A little reflection enables me to understand the appearances of neglect which you were kind enough to mention to me the other day. It was in March, 1797 you did me the honor of calling on me. I had then come up to Philadelphia only to take the oath of office. On that occasion I received the visits not only of every one in the city who had known me, but of great numbers who did not. The Senate adjourned finally the same day; so that being to return immediately, it was impossible to repay the numerous visits I had received. I counted therefore on finding my excuse in the impossibility of the thing. Your distance from the town prevented your knowlege of this circumstance, while those who were in the city saw & felt my justification in my departure. During the ensuing summer came on the war-fever. Those who caught it seemed to consider every man as their personal enemy who would not catch their disorder, and many suffered themselves to think it was a sufficient cause for breaking off society with them. I became sensible of this on my next arrival in town, on perceiving that many declined visiting me with whom I had been on terms of the greatest friendship & intimacy. I determined, for the first time in my life, to stand on the ceremony of the first visit, even with my friends; because it served to sift out those who chose a separation. I was happy to be informed by yourself that your declining to visit was on a different ground; a ground too, which while it might well appear otherwise to you then, you will now be sensible I hope was involuntary & unavoidable on

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my part. I never considered a difference of opinion in politics, in religion, in philosophy, as cause for withdrawing from a friend. During the whole of the last war, which was trying enough, I never deserted a friend because he had taken an opposite side; & those of my own state who joined the British government can attest my unremitting zeal in saving their property, & can point out the laws in our statute book which I drew, & carried through in their favor. However I have seen during the late political paroxysm here numbers whom I had highly esteemed; draw off from me, in so much as to cross the street to avoid meeting me. The fever is abating and doubtless some of them will correct the momentary wanderings of their heart, & return again. If they do, they will meet the constancy of my esteem, & the same oblivion of this as of any other delirium which might happen to them. I am happy to find you as clear of political antipathies as I am; & am particularly

obliged by the frankness of your explanation. I owe to it the opportunity of placing myself justly before you, and of assuring you there was no person here to whom I had less disposition of shewing neglect than to yourself. The circumstances of our early acquaintance I have ever felt as binding me in morality as well as in affection, & there are so many agreeable points in which we are in perfect union that I am at no loss to find a justification of my constant esteem.

Among the many botanical curiosities you were so good as to shew me the other day, I forgot to ask if you had the *Dionea muscipula*, & whether it produces a seed with you. If it does, I should be very much disposed to trespass on your liberality so far as to ask a few seeds of that, as also of the *Acacia Nilotica*, or *Farnesiana* whichever you have. I pray you to accept assurances of the sincere attachment & respect of Dear Sir your most obedient humble servant.